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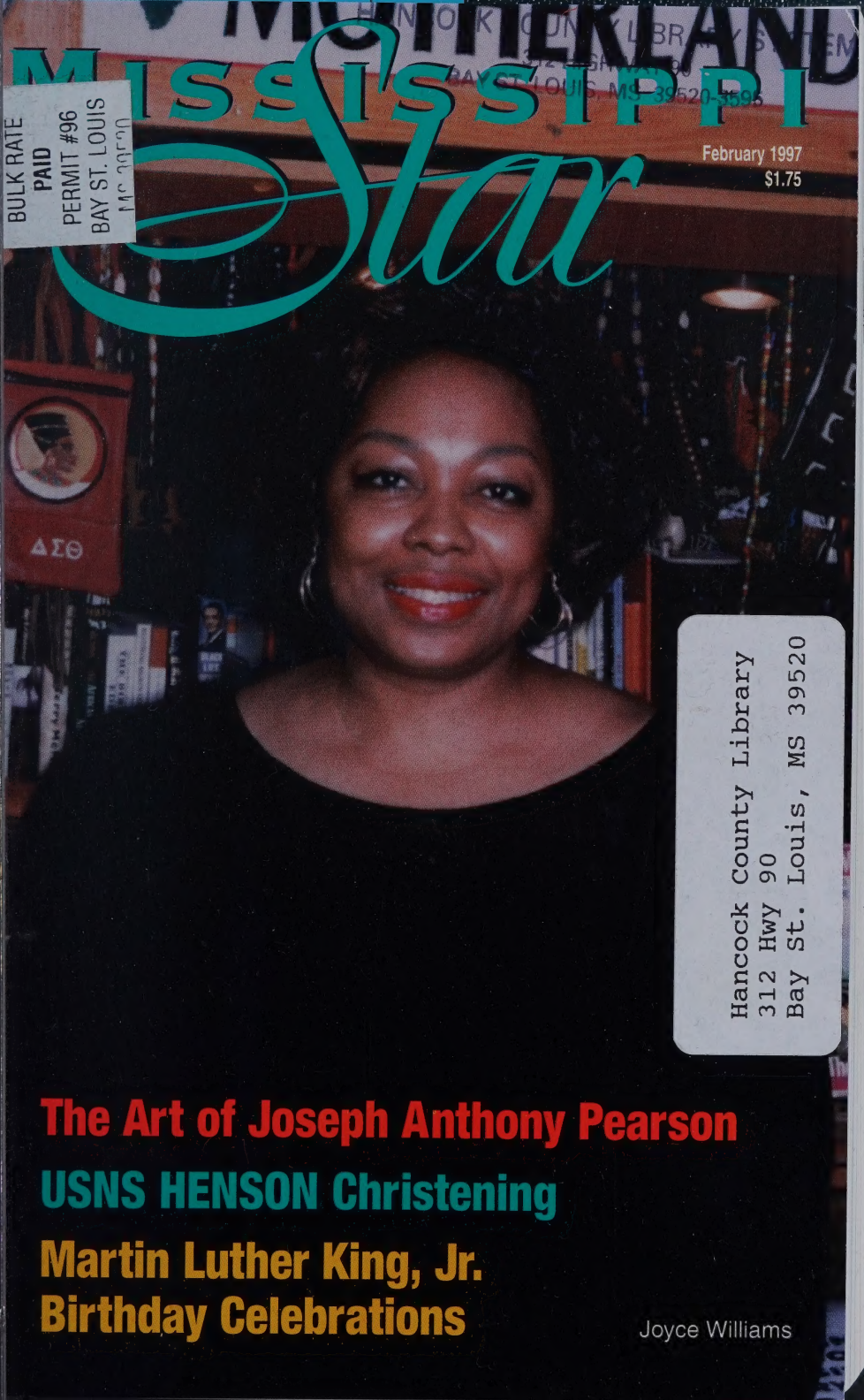

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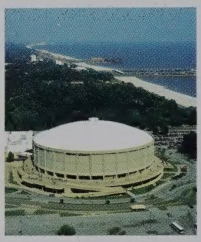
The Art of Joseph Anthony Pearson

USNS HENSON Christening

Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebrations

Joyce Williams

Harrison County



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MISSISSIPPI Star

VOL.1 NO. 6 FEBRUARY 1997

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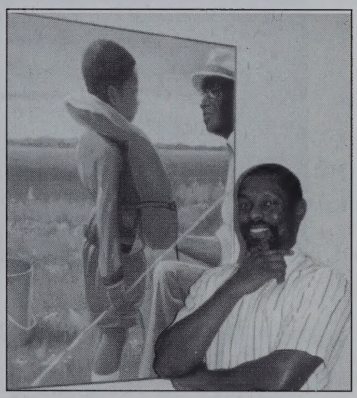

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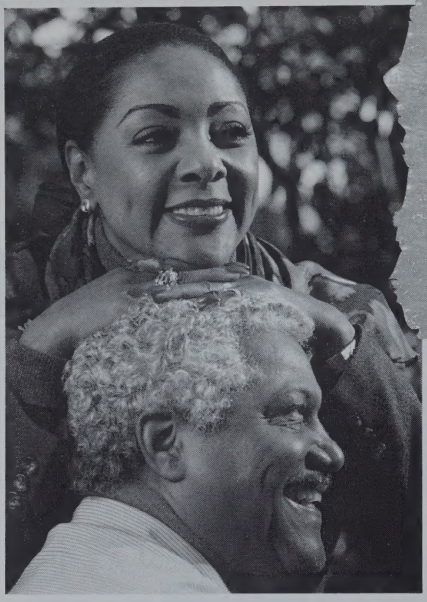

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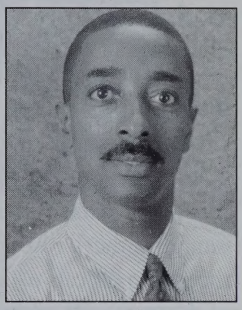
PUBLISHER'S PAGE



Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

Black History Month is celebrated one month of the year, but that doesn't mean this is the only time we should be interested in our heritage. Don't fall for the hype. Our history is important every month, every week and every day of the year.

All of us are familiar with the statement that goes something like this: Those who forget their history are destined to repeat it. I certainly don't want to experience the lynchings, beatings or any of the other savage treatments that African-American men, women and children experienced during slavery as well as post-slavery in their struggles to increase opportunities for present and future generations.

Is a one-month celebration sufficient tribute for the many lives lost battling systematic injustice and virtual aparthied? Are a few special events during Black History Month adequate recognition for the many sacrifices made on a daily basis by Mississippians such as Medgar Evers, Aaron Henry, Dr. Gilbert Mason, Fannie Lou Hammer, Henry Kirksey and the scores of other civil rights leaders and supporters during difficult times when lynching was fashionable?

I think not. Black History Month should be a rejuvenation period when we reinvigorate our efforts to learn about our past and the many, many brave people who impacted the changes that took us from Africa through slavery to where we are today in America.

Granted, we are not where we want to be, but we are a hell of a way from where we used to be. We are indebted to so many people.

Many of us have stories to tell of our relatives who in some small or big way impacted change in our communities. I like to tell the story of my Grandmother's role in the integrating of the public beach in Bay St. Louis. One day she took about six or seven of her grandchildren to the beach. I knew we were at the "wrong" beach because she had taken us to the "right" beach so many times before. Scared and nervous, we all followed my Grandmother into the water. In a matter of seconds, the whites in the water who had been staring at us as we approached began running out of the water as if it had been poisoned.

Continued on p. 6

PUBLISHER'S PAGE
CONTINUED...

The media arrived shortly as well as three patrol cars and a mob of angry citizens who didn't appreciate what was going on. But the thing I remember most of that incident was my Grandmother's response when one of the police officers ordered us to get out of the water. "I pay taxes so that I can bring my children here," she argued defiantly. "They ought to be able to swim here."

Some time later, maybe a few years, we could swim at any section of the beach we desired. My Grandmother had stood up for something in which she believed, and the result was good.

Black History Month is an excellent time to start learning as much as we can about our families and the many, many brave people who impacted the lives of Blacks in Mississippi and America. We just may come across somebody with whom we may have a great deal in common, someone who has overcome an obstacle with which we may be struggling.

The best way to enjoy Black History Month is to learn as much as we can about the many stories of success despite obstacles and hardships and then begin to see ourselves in the same roles. If we can do that, we can truly appreciate the creativity, resilience and strength of a dynamic culture. MS

MISSISSIPPI Star

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LETTERS

Three cheers for the staff and writers of *Mississippi Star!* I think you all are doing the community a great service. Your articles are very interesting and personable. I usually read from cover to cover in one sitting and often find myself taking a second look when reflecting over a particular article.

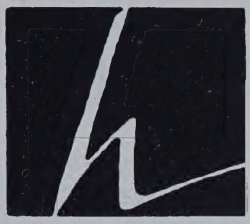
In your premiere issue you invited everyone to "Catch a Rising Star." I did just that by purchasing a subscription and have been very satisfied with each subsequent issue. Mississippi Star will definitely be a top choice for Mississippi readers. Keep up the good work! May your "STAR" continue to shine brightly.

Wanda Bateaste
D'Iberville

Letters to the Publisher should be 100 words or less. **Star Calendar:** Events of interest to South Mississippians should be submitted on your organization's letterhead, specifying the date, time, place of event and a number of contact.

Submissions should be received by the twentieth day of the preceding month. Be sure to include a daytime telephone number. Mail submissions to Mississippi Star, P.O. Box 2651, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.

Mississippi Star reserves the right to refuse or decline to publish any submission.



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POSITIVE REFLECTIONS

Positive reflections of our culture, concerning the arts, sports, inventors, the church or historical figures stimulate the pride in us. The majority of us want to be associated with the "good stuff." And there is certainly a great deal of good when we look at our culture. The African-American Mississippian has contributed greatly to our state and country.

Who would have ever thought thirty-something years ago that the little girl being raised by her grandparents near Carthage, Mississippi would one day host the most watched daytime television talk show or to eventually become the wealthiest woman in the television industry? Mississippi, the poorest state in the country by most media accounts has five universities run by African Americans. Eighteen active National Basketball Association players were either raised or educated in Mississippi - a record number of players from the state playing at the same time.

The stories of Oprah Winfrey, Medger Evers, James Earl Jones and Morgan Freeman are just a few of the African-American personalities available at local libraries in either book or film which can provide us with enjoyable reflection of who we are and what we are capable of achieving.

Why should we read or view films about African-American Mississippians? First of all, because the stories are usually incredibly inspiring and rich in experience.

Secondly, the life paths of those we study may be quite similar; the obstacles that Oprah encountered may not be much different from the obstacles that many of us encounter in our pursuits of success. And certainly, the heroism, particularly of those who lost their lives when they attempted to improve living conditions for the rest of us, is remarkable and extremely interesting.

Recommended For Black History Month

Reading: A Hard Road To Glory, (a series of books by the late Arthur Ashe about African Americans in sports), Now Is Your Time: The African-American Struggle for Freedom by Walter Dean Myers and African Americans: Voices of Triumph a series of books by Time-Life Books.

Film: Once Upon A Time When We Were Colored , Roots, For Us The Living (Medgar Evers), and The Learning Tree.

Several of the books and films suggested on this page are available at your local library. Others may be available at bookstores or video rental stores. MS

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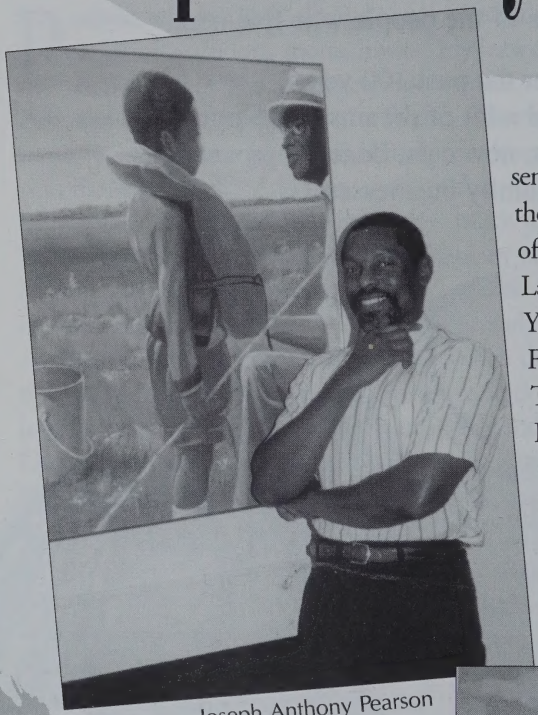
Joseph Anthony Pearson

The Art of Life

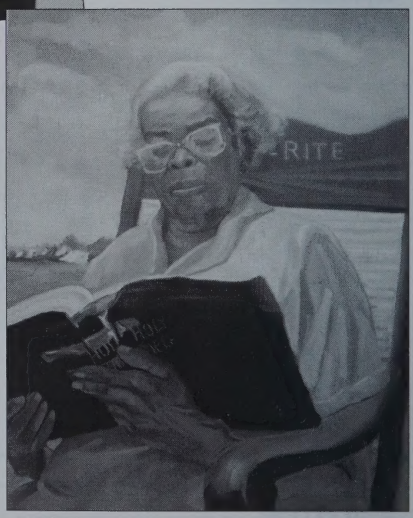


Joseph Anthony Pearson

Joseph Anthony Pearson is one of four artists whose works will be featured during the month of February at the George E. Ohr Arts and Cultural Center in Biloxi. On February 8th a symposium celebrating Black History Month will feature lectures, open forum discussions and children's workshops by nationally and internationally recognized art educators and lecturers. This event will be preceded by a 6:00 p.m. reception on February 7th.

In addition to Pearson, the presenters include the chairperson of the Eula McClaney Foundation of Beverly Hills, California, Dr. LaDoris McClaney; Professor Yvonne Edwards-Tucker of Florida A & M University in Tallahassee, Florida; Professor Louis Delsarte of Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia; and Mr. Paul Houzell of PAL-H ART DIRECT of Los Angeles, California.

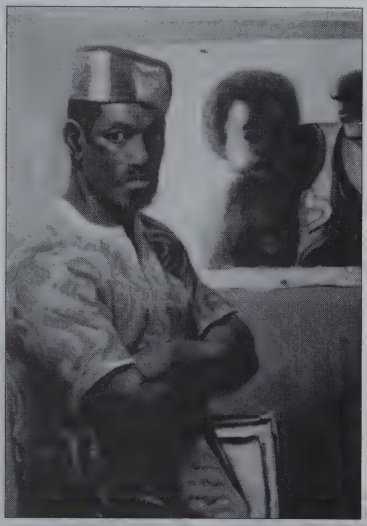
"This is a history-making



"With These Hands" J. A. Pearson

event," said Pearson who is a member of the American Society of Portrait Artists and resides in Waveland. "This is the first time an event this big has featured four African-American artists. And this is a stepping stone of things to come."

The symposium was initiated by Ronald O. Walker, the executive director of Community Bridges, an organization which focuses on identification of multinational and local ethnic cultures in the visual and performing arts. For additional information regarding exhibit and symposium times, please call 392-3284 or the George E. Ohr Arts & Cultural Center at 374-5547.



"Prince Joseph" J. A. Pearson

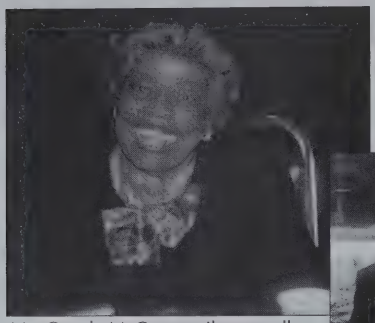
"Daily Ritual" J. A. Pearson

"Sunrise" J. A. Pearson

"Chillin" J. A. Pearson

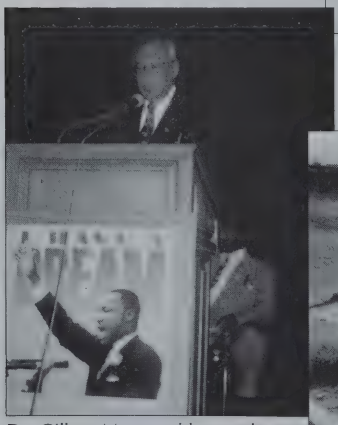
MLK Birthday Celebrations!

Activities Honor Martin Luther King, Jr.



Ms. Oseola McCarty smiles proudly as she takes time to autograph her book.

Fr. Francis Theriault, S.V.D. flanked by civic leaders at the Laying of the Wreath Ceremony in Bay St. Louis.



Dr. Gilbert Mason addresses the audience at the Coast-Wide Celebration at the Gulf Coast Coliseum.

Jackson County SCLC President Roy Parker and Jackson County NAACP President Aneice Liddell join Rev. John W. Davis, Sr. for the Laying of the Wreath Ceremony in Jackson County.

Ms. Oseola McCarty and her friend and traveling companion, Mrs. Jewel Tucker.

Sandra Edwards and Shaar Soule Robinson join a crowded Isiah Frederick Community Center audience in the singing of Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing.

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Dr. Stephen Ambrose, historian, biographer
Dr. Ray Skates, historian, author

Event II: 7:00 p.m. USM Gulf Park, Hardy Hall Auditorium

Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander, Mississippi novelist
The Honorable Mike Moore, Attorney General of Mississippi

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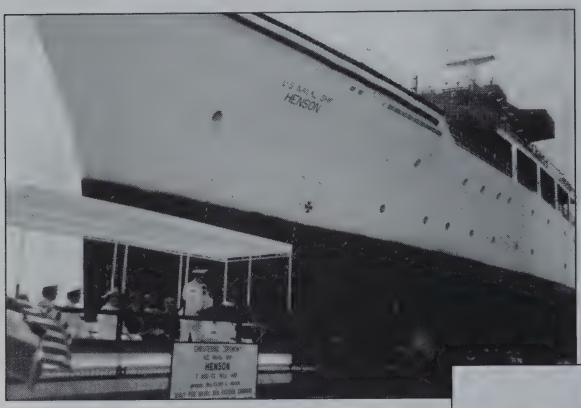
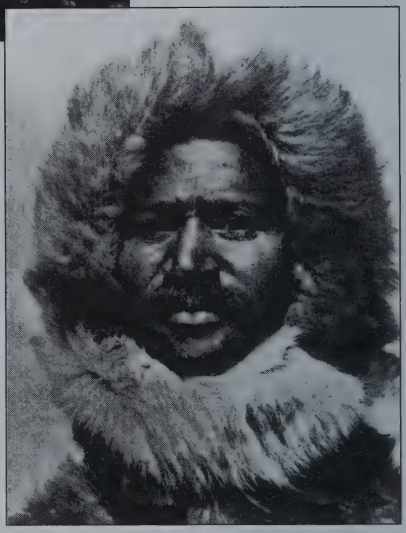
Matthew Alexander Henson
EXPLORER



Survey ship USNS HENSON at Halter Marine in Pascagoula

The Navy launched the oceanographic survey ship USNS HENSON at Halter Marine, Inc. shipyard in Moss Point in October. Named after the African-American explorer, Matthew A. Henson, a key member of Admiral Robert E. Peary's 1909 expedition to the North Pole, the USNS HENSON will become part of a fleet of eight oceanographic ships operated for the Oceanographer of the Navy.

Matthew Henson was born in Maryland in 1866. At age 12, he went to sea aboard a merchant vessel. In 1887 he was selling hats on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC when Peary entered the store as a customer and convinced Henson to accompany him on an expedition to Nicaragua. This was the beginning of a twenty-three year association which culminated in their arrival at the North Pole on April 6, 1909.



Popular photograph of the explorer Matthew A. Henson

Henson became an indispensable part of Peary's Arctic expedition team, the only team member to remain with Peary as they approached the Pole, and possibly the first to actually reach the Pole. Henson died in New York City in 1955 and was buried there. In 1988 his body was reinterred in Arlington National Cemetery.

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JOYCE WILLIAMS

"It gives validity to African-American art and our authors," says the entrepreneur who opened the African-American gift and novelty store five and half years ago. "Motherland is a vehicle for us and other cultures to learn about and to appreciate our culture."

The energetic businesswoman says that building success is much like baking a cake. "There are certain ingredients that are mixed together to get a desired outcome. We (African Americans) have all the ingredients to achieve success, but we first have to think like successful people."

The things Mrs. Williams find most discouraging are the negative statements she hears about African Americans as a people that come from our own mouths: "We don't want..." "They won't let us have..." "We can't work together..."

"African Americans have always and are still working together for the betterment of our communities," she asserts. "Just because we all don't think the same does not mean that we are not working together." MS

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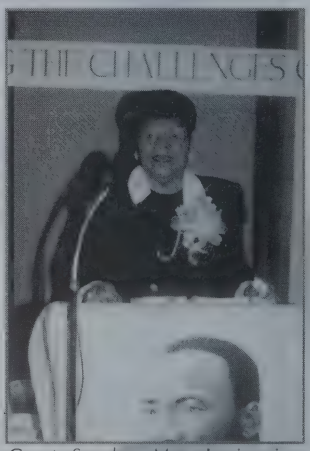
Linda Armstrong leads a spirit-filled rendition of We Shall Overcome at South Christian Leadership Conference banquet.

Moss Point Mayor Iral Polk recognizes the various churches and organizations represented at SCLC banquet.

Troy Parker, Deborah Washington, Loretta Jennings, Hazel Molden, Rev. Alvin Moote and Mary Alfred demonstrate unity during singing of We Shall Overcome.



Guest Speaker Mrs. Lucimarian Roberts

outhern Christian erence Banquet

H.S. football players on hand to receive the Dream plaque: Van Hardin, Kelbert elious Borden, David Lewis and Bryan

Rev. Cortez Keeton and Emma Keeton

. Cortez Keeton, Loretta Jennings, Rev. C.E. Griffin and ton Harris.

Hattie Richardson

Robin Alfred Midcalf
Memoirs From Russia...

Robin Alfred Midcalf behind podium in a local House of "Duma" (State Legislature)

In April of 1996, I was nominated by Ms. Virginia Shanteau Newton, who serves on the Mississippi State Port Authority and the Mississippi State College Board, to participate in the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) exchange program. Ms. Newton is a former ACYPL delegate and she traveled to South Africa.

I was notified in August of 1996 that I had been selected to serve as a delegate in Russia. This was very exciting news for me as well as a little intimidating. This was a once in a lifetime experience and I had to get over the shock of being selected. The ACYPL was formed in 1966 as a non-profit, bipartisan, educational exchange organization to enhance foreign policy understanding and exposure among rising young American political leaders and their counterparts around the world. The program achieves its goals through a

Example of unique architectural styles

broad range of practical education programs, including international exchanges, foreign policy an democracy conferences and election study program.

The ACYPL exchange programs are selected by a six-member Delegate Selection Committee with Democratic and Republican co-chairs. Delegate nominations are solicited annually from state legislative leaders, Governors, party officials, former participants (like Ms. Newton), members of the ACYPL council, ACYPL Trustees and supporters and contributors to ACYPL programs. These nominations produce a pool of approximately one thousand candidates each year. The Russian delegation was unique I'm told, in that we actually had two Mississippians. I was fortunate enough to be traveling with fellow Mississippian, State Senator Neely Carlton, of Greenville, Mississippi. The delegation I traveled with was just as (if not more) interesting as the people I met in Russia. Others in the delegation included Peter Dagher, who was the Director of Operations for the Clinton/Gore 96 campaign; Rushern Baker, a State Delegate in the Maryland Assembly; Robin Nystrom, V. President of Enterprise, Florida, Inc., a public/private economic development venture; Jim Battin, a State Assemblyman from the State of California; Alan Kindrick, Executive Assistant to Senator John

Yaroslavi, Russia: ACYPL group with guide; Robin Alfred Midcalf is fourth from left.

Ashcroft of Maryland; Stacy Carlson, Staff Director in the U. S. House of Representatives. Ms. Carlson actually works for House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Didn't I tell you this was an interesting mix.?

We left Washington, D. C. From Dulles Airport at approximately 7:35 p.m. on Friday, December 6th, for Frankfurt, Germany. We arrived in Frankfurt at 9:25 a.m., Saturday morning, December 7th. Let me remind you, this was my first international flight. The longest I had ever been on a flight was 4-6 hours, so try to picture all of us the next morning after having slept in flight, arriving in Germany and scrambling to find a place to brush our teeth, comb our hair an just look "decent." Well, I must admit, after brushing our teeth and freshening up with baby wipes, no one really cared about hair, wrinkles in clothes, etc. By the way, always travel with baby wipes, especially on long flights. In fact, you could probably sell the wipes for as much as $3.00 a piece to desperate politicians trying to get the sleep out of their eyes!

We departed Germany at 12:10 p.m. for St. Petersburg, Russia. I had one cup of cappuccino in the airport and I'm still confused as to how much I paid for the coffee, but let me assure you, it was the last cup of good coffee we would enjoy for a while. I slept in the airport for a couple of hours during the layover, another first.

Well, we finally arrived in St. Petersburg around 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 7th. We had to clear customs and I didn't have any

problems, so I guess I didn't look like a smuggler or spy. There's always one in every group, and we had ours, the one person who was stopped at every checkpoint.

We were met at the airport by a translator and a Mr. Alex Forkov, who is Vice President of the "Movement for Understanding Association", the ACYPL counterpart in Russia. We checked into our rooms (double accommodations), showered, went to dinner, and then I think we all passed out from sheer exhaustion. I failed to mention that most of the time we were carrying, dragging pushing and pulling luggage. The next morning we were all refreshed. We had breakfast which consisted of lots of bread and diet coke. I don't drink diet sodas so I knew I was in trouble. They did, however, have bottled water, vodka, and champagne for sale at every meal. I chose the bottled water; well, okay, the truth is I was forced to drink a little vodka because it is their custom to drink vodka and give toasts. They did a lot of toasting and I did a lot of glass switching so that I was actually drinking water when someone refilled a vodka glass.

We toured the city of St. Petersburg and saw several of the beautiful cathedrals formerly owned by the Czars and dictators. When the replicas of the Palaces of St. Petersburg were in Jackson, I toured the exhibit twice. However, nothing compares to actually seeing the palaces. They were all so breathtakingly beautiful. However, the down side for me was knowing how the Czars and their families lived, while the people lived as peasants. I had a real problem truly appreciating the beauty knowing of the blood, sweat, tears and even lives lost to building and maintaining the palaces.

On Sunday evening, December 8th, we went to the theater to watch the ballet. The performance was "Schelkunchik," the Russian rendition of the Nutcracker. The experience was absolutely beautiful.

A funny thing happened during

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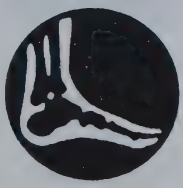

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intermission, as I sat in the box looking over the theatre, a gentleman with an obvious English accent came over and introduced himself. He started telling me how he met my husband and how impressed he was and wished we could get together again. Well, not wanting to be rude, I was trying to figure out just who this man was he thought was my husband, especially considering that am not married, engaged, or otherwise attached. Being divorced for 17 years, I knew he couldn't have been speaking of my "ex" who lives in New Jersey. Just as the performance was about to resume, and as the gentleman took his seat, I realized he had met the only other black in the entire theatre and assumed he was my husband. My traveling companions really got a kick out of that incident.

The next day, Monday, December 9th, we visited the Marinksy Palace and met with the Deputy Chairman of the Economic and Industrial Policy Committee, Victor Studnev. Some of the palaces are now used as museums and government offices. We had lunch at the restaurant "Assambleya." The food was different, but good. I loved the soups. They cook with lots of potatoes and salt. Later on this day, we went to "Poushkin" and visited Eatereninsky Palace, another palace formerly housing ancestors of Peter the Great. The name Poushkin comes from a famous Russian poet who is Russia's version of Shakespeare. One of our traveling companions was obsessed with Poushkin and finding a piece of his original poetry collection in Russian. Mr. Baker gave us such in-depth information about Poushkin, we decided to call our group the Poushkin Society. Poushkin, of course, is long deceased so we are

Example of unique architectural styles

Wall art inside one of the palaces of St. Petersburg

the dead poet's society. Get it?

On Tuesday, December 10th, we traveled to Taurida Palace and from there to meet with Petr Riabukhin, a representative of the Federal Assembly Russian Federation. We had lunch at Taurida Palace (more potatoes). We departed the hotel and headed to the train depot for our 4:30 train ride to Yaroslavl, Russia. May I remind you that at 4:30 p.m. in Russia, it is 7:30 a.m. in the States. It took awhile for our body clocks to adjust. In fact, I'm not sure mine ever did. I would wake up in two hour intervals and I never slept an entire night while there.

The train ride was very interesting. One train station was a maze of a different world (literally). Can you imagine standing in the middle of a depot with literally thousands of people, unable to read or speak the native language; trying to drag, push, pull overstuffed luggage and keep up with your link to sanity. . . . . your translator. Well, we boarded the train with little incident and the four women bunked in a four-person compartment. This was no Amtrak, let me tell you. My sleepmates were quite interesting. Visualize us (4 women) in a 6' x 6' (my estimate) compartment with overhead bunks and twelve pieces of luggage, four coats, four purses and miscellaneous bags. By sheer coincidence, we bunked the two Republicans on top and the two Democrats on the bottom The guys ended up the same way,

Republicans on top and Democrats on the bottom. Of course, the Republicans tried to read something into this coincidence. One of my roomies snored and talked in her sleep, one grinded her teeth, and the other Robin was a perfect roomie with no annoying sleep habits. The most memorable experience was when we all headed to the restroom with full bladders during a stop only to discover we could not use the toilet during stops due to some regulation. So we danced around for approximately twenty minutes and prayed for strong bladder control.

Fourteen hours later we arrived in Yaroslavl. Yaroslavl has a population of approximately 700,000 people and is 350 kilometers northeast of Moscow. You'll have to do your own conversion to miles, I'm not good at that! We arrived at our hotel around 7:30 a.m. I took a shower and got in the bed to nap until our 11:30 a.m. meeting with local officials. Our guide was Tatiana Molchanova. She works with the Yaroslavl Regional Administration Department for Youth Affairs. Later in the day we went to the Yaroslavl State University and had a question/answer session with several students. The education at the University is cost-free to the students. Everyone in the area impressed me with their desire to learn, gain exposure and get as much formal education as they could. I was also impressed with how many Russians spoke other languages, including English. It made me wonder why the United States doesn't push for a second language exposure beginning in kindergarten.

On Thursday, December 12th, we went to the town of Rostov. We met with the Mayor of Rostov and visited the Rostov Kremlin. I discovered every city has a Kremlin. I, with my limited exposure, thought the Kremlin was only in Moscow. However, the Kremlin is simply where the government officials are housed.

We also visited a small town called Tutaev and met with the Mayor and his assistants. Most of the mayors had a 50% or more female-headed staff. I found that very impressive. We visited a school and spoke with the children about their future plans. Not unlike our children, they aspired for much of the same..... a good education, jobs, travel, etc. I took several pictures of the school children, however, none of them were able to be processed. Another confession, I can't operate even the simplest of mechanical devices. All I had to do was push a button. My assistant loaned me her husband's camera and assured me it was simple and even I could handle the mechanics of operation. Well, I failed!

We had a very touching farewell

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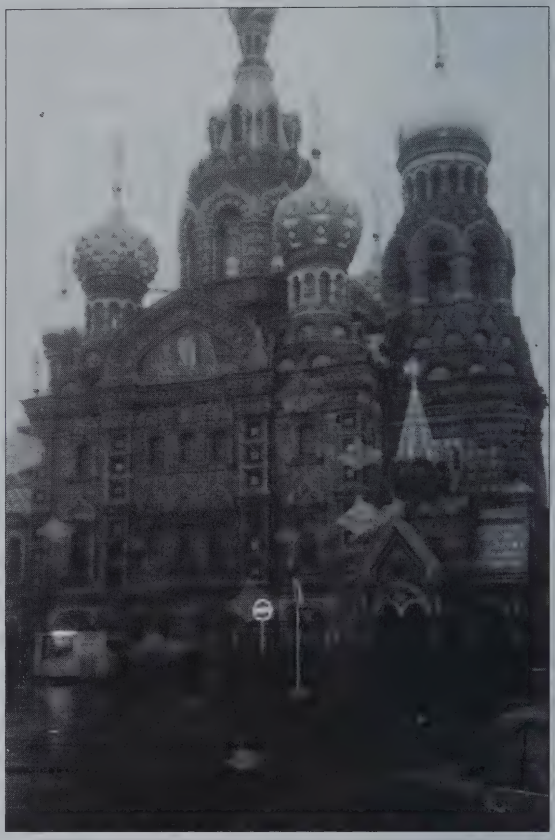
dinner at the hotel before leaving for the midnight train to Moscow on Saturday, December 15th. By this time, although enjoying the trip, I was a little frustrated. I had been gone since December 5th and had not spoken with my daughter since I left. Due to the time difference, lack of communication in hotels, I could not make an outside call. I was really looking forward to Moscow because everyone said it was like our New York and that it was. Technology is wonderful. I called my daughter at 7:30 a.m. (U.S.) on Sunday morning. She was still in bed and I failed to realize it was so early in the U. S. Incidentally, she turned eighteen the next day and I heard rumblings of this party at my house. From the looks of things when I returned, it looked more like 10 college students had taken over and didn't know what a broom, dishwasher, vacuum, or making beds was. Boy, was I happy to have the walls still standing. I'm still trying to clean up from my absence. (Otherwise, she really is a decent kid. Excuse me, a young adult.)



A palace in St. Petersburg.

In Moscow, we stayed at the Hotel Russia. Donald Trump is negotiating the purchase of this hotel which I'm told is the largest in Europe. It is roach, rat and prostitute infested. This was reported in the local paper the day of our departure. I never saw all of the interior of the hotel, but I did see roaches and many, many ladies of the evening strolling the corridors. I didn't see any rats.

We went to several markets, the real Kremlin and we also visited the tomb of Lenin. So I can report, Lenin is dead; well preserved, but dead. We also went to the circus. The circus runs every single day and is sold out every single day in Moscow. Can you imagine?

In conclusion, let me mention the weather. Russia had the mildest winter ever in history and that's how we survived. The snow was beautiful and I returned to Washington, D. C. with a canceled flight waiting on me (well, not actually waiting on me since it was canceled, but you know what I mean) due to snow in Mississippi. Imagine that!

I am most grateful to the ACYPL and Virginia Newton for the opportunity to have this great adventure. Special thanks to Maurice Singleton and the Mississippi Star staff for the opportunity to share my Russian experiences.

It gave me great pleasure to tell anyone who would listen about the wonderful people in Harrison County, Mississippi. I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing this experience and did indeed enjoy representing Harrison County and the State of Mississippi in Russia, as well as with other people from across our nation. Although my travels are limited, through readings my experiences are vast. When assessing them both, I always conclude: I am glad to be an American citizen and proud to be a Mississippian. Thank you for allowing me to share my Russian experience. Or as they would say in Russia, "Spacebo" which means "thank you." MS

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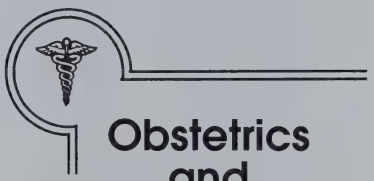
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News Briefs

Biloxi

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce named Lucimarian Roberts as the winner of the annual Pat Santucci Spirit of the Coast Award on January 21. The award is named in honor of the former South Central Bell district manager who died in 1991. The award recognizes an individual on the basis of leadership and work toward promoting the Coast. Mrs. Roberts is a founding member of Leadership Gulf Coast and is a commissioner for the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center.

Pascagoula

June 2 is the date set for Mississippi's suit against the nation's tobacco companies. The trial is set for Jackson County Chancery Court. The state is seeking $240 million to repay state Medicare and Medicaid programs for dollars spent treating people with smoking-related illnesses.

Waveland

Mrs. Patricia D. Tice was crowned Mother of the Year at the annual Supper Theatre program sponsored by the Hancock County Branch of the NAACP. Tice raised a total of $1015.00. The runner-up, Darlene Robinson raised $811.00. Lonnie Bradley received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for his service to his community and the NAACP.

Jackson

State lawmakers are considering a bill to reduce the incidence of smoking among state teenagers. Under the proposed bill, anyone eighteen years of age or younger who possesses tobacco products could be fined up to $75 or ordered to perform up to 25 hours of community service.

Biloxi

Mayor A. J. Holloway announced his candidacy for re-election on Tuesday, January 28. Holloway's announcement brings the total number of candidates to four so far, three Republicans and one Democrat.

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Guest Word

by Sonya L. Williams

Black History Month is an appropriate time to provide a fragment of Black history as it relates to the funeral service industry. Beginning in Egyptian times and continuing through today's modern practices of funeral service, Blacks have performed a vital role in caring for the deceased as well as rendering services to bereaved families. In African-American communities, funeral homes, as many of us call them, are consistently some of the few Black-owned businesses that are still alive and used by our people.

Funeral service practices among Blacks in America began during the time of slavery. Slaves were denied by their masters to bury their loved ones and were also denied the opportunity to have African-rooted, dignified funeral services. Because of this slaves learned to build their own coffins, prepare their own remains and dig graves for their deceased. This is how African-American funeral service began.

African Americans played a vital role in the handling of fallen soldiers during the Civil War. The removal of deceased soldiers from the battle fields was handled by African Americans, who are also credited with most of the embalming during this war. This included African-American as well as Caucasian fallen soldiers. African Americans were also active in the organization and maintenance of Veteran Cemeteries throughout our country.

There are only a few African-American institutions that have survived desegregation and economic hardships within our communities. Among the survivors are our churches, night clubs, beauty and barber shops and funeral homes. They remain exclusively owned and patronized by African-American clientele.

As a race, we can be proud that we are responsible for many endowments contributed to our society. We can also be proud that this includes the foundation of embalming and funeral service, not only in America but throughout the world.

Sonya L. Williams
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Calendar

February 1
Krewe of Real People
Mardi Gras Ball
Civic Center, Waveland
9:00p.m. - until

February 6 - 7
"Ain't They Bad,
and Ain't They Black"
Tribute to African-American Poets,
Playwrights and Entertainers
University Park Auditorium
Jackson State University
7:30p.m.

February 7
Community Bridges
African-American Artists
Reception
George E. Ohr Arts &
Cultural Center
Biloxi
6:00-9:00p.m.
Ronald O. Walker 392-3284

February 8
Community Briges
African-American Art Symposium
George E. Ohr Arts &
Cultural Center
Biloxi
10:00a.m.
Ronald O. Walker 392-3284

February 11
Krewe of Real People
Mardi Gras Parade
Bay St. Louis
1:00p.m.

February 15
African American Heritage
Tour of Natchez
7:00a.m. - 7:00p.m.
Contact:
Annette Stevenson 922-5077

February 17
NAACP Hancock County Chapter
Monthly Meeting
Hancock County Library
Bay St. Louis
7:00p.m.

February 19
Oratorical Contest
for High School Students
Sponsored by Stennis Chapter
Blacks in Government
SSC Building 1100, Room 107
11:00a.m.
Michelle Dailey 688-4349

February 27
Visions For Leadership
Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander,
Novelist
The Honorable Mike Moore
Attorney General of Mississippi
University of Southern Mississippi
Sponsored by USM Gulf Coast
& Mississippi Gulf Coast
Community College
7:00p.m.

February 28
Ebony Fashion Fair
University Park Auditorium
Jackson
8:00p.m.

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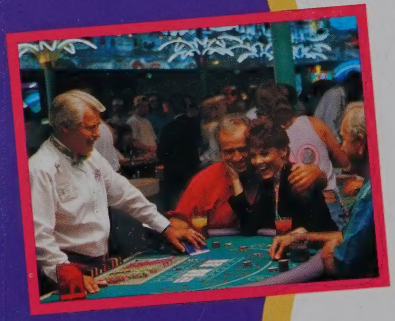

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